



Walsall College principal Jatinder Sharma celebrates the Ofsted result with staff, students and governors

Picture by Edward Moss

# Wonder Walsall

Chris Henwood  
@Chris\_Henwood

The first general FE college to achieve an outstanding grade under Ofsted's tough new inspection regime has been announced.

Walsall College, in the West Midlands, won glowing praise from the education watchdog across its headline fields.

Its success means the college is also the first to get a published Ofsted report with outstanding for teaching and learning — a field that, under the common inspection framework introduced in September, limits the overall grade.

Principal Jatinder Sharma said: "We are incredibly proud of this achievement and delighted that Ofsted has recognised the college as one of the best in the country for outstanding teaching and learning, and the impact this has on producing high levels of success.

"This would not have been possible without the dedication shown by all staff and governors at the college in ensuring students are stretched and challenged in their studies, enabling them to fulfil their true potential and successfully progress

to university or into employment.

"Over the past few years we have also worked hard to develop strategies to create an inclusive environment that promotes equality and diversity, making it easier for all students to access learning and this was again highly praised by the inspectors."

The 15,000-learner college, rated as good in 2008, was re-inspected around the middle of last month.

The Ofsted report said it was "rooted in its community and works in very strong partnership with key organisations for the benefit of students and to promote the regeneration and prosperity of the borough".

The report added: "Teachers set very high standards, have very high expectations and use their vocational skills and expertise to make lessons motivating, interesting and memorable.

"Lessons are well planned, engaging and enable students to make rapid progress and achieve well.

"Leaders, managers and governors have an ambitious vision for the college and its students."

The report comes around four months after chief inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw's annual report in which he called on the government

Walsall College	
Overall grade: Outstanding <b>1</b>	
Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
Teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding

to "shine a spotlight" on FE.

He pointed out how 13 colleges were graded as inadequate in 2011/12, compared with four the previous year.

And just two colleges achieved outstanding last year — the most recent being Hampshire's Eastleigh College in July, inspected under the old framework.

The new framework, introduced from September, followed Ofsted's Good Education For All consultation that ended last May.

It includes a reduced inspection notice period from three weeks to two days and a potential re-inspection of providers 'requiring improvement' within 12 to 18 months.

Providers who get the grade twice in a row can be judged inadequate on their third inspection if they

haven't improved.

The first good grading under the new framework went to City College Plymouth after an inspection in October.

And Mr Sharma said he wanted his college to build on its outstanding grade.

"Our aim now is to continue to embed further improvements and ensure more students in the community are able to access the outstanding education and resources available at Walsall to set them on their chosen career paths," he said.

"Current students and new students looking to join us in September can be confident that they will be studying at a forward-thinking college highly recognised by Ofsted, for not only producing excellent results, but also for making sure students graduate with the qualifications needed to progress to higher education or the skills required in the workplace."

It is the second outstanding Ofsted rating to have gone to the Black Country town recently, with Walsall Adult and Community College having achieved the grade — as a local authority provider, rather than general FE — in January.

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Monday, March 25, 2013  
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Edition 61

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Learning & Skills Events, Consultancy and Training Ltd  
161-165 Greenwich High Road  
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# Halesowen staff escalate action

Eleanor Radford  
[@EleanorRadford](#)

Halesowen College staff have pledged to boycott lesson observations as four sacked staff announced they were taking the college to an employment tribunal.

The University and College Union (UCU) said that from today around 60 of their members at the college, near Birmingham, would snub "anything to do with lesson observations" as the row over the sackings continued.

The union also claimed to have "discovered" that "replacement lecturers were appointed by the college last October — two months before the existing staff were sacked or had the opportunity to appeal against their dismissals".

The union's regional official, Nick Varney, said: "The new teachers started work on the same day that three of the existing teachers had disciplinary hearings.

"It is extremely telling that members feel so strongly about the behaviour of college management that they have voted to continue taking action alongside the legal action that has the full support of the national union."

The dispute began with the dismissal of maths lecturer and union branch chair David Muritu on the day before the college closed for Christmas. In January three other maths lecturers — also active union members — were sacked and, like Mr Muritu, have since lost their appeals.

The college said it dismissed Mr Muritu

because of his students' poor results. At the time the college told FE Week they had provided the lecturer "intensive support" over a period of three years.

"However, David Muritu had failed to make any improvement in student attainment, and indeed the pass rate declined further over the period," said a college spokesperson.

but the UCU claimed the former maths lecturer was "treated unfairly" labelling it an "attack" on union workers.

Mr Varney added: "At all the appeals the employer did not have enough evidence against the individuals to dismiss them and used students' failure to achieve certain levels of attainment as a basis for sacking them. Not only is this unfair, but it threatens all lecturers' jobs at the college.

"The industrial action makes the point that all the lecturers were sacked despite good teaching grades from their lesson observations."

Union members took strike action on February 14, claiming they were "banned" from delivering a mock Valentine's Day card to college principal Keith Bate with thousands of signatures calling for the sacked lecturers' reinstatement.

FE Week reported last month how union members marched through the Midland town chanting support for the "Halesowen four", as they have become known in press coverage, just a month after a picket on the same issue.

The college declined to comment on the union's latest claims.

## FE Week news in brief Conference cancelled

A national funding conference hosted by Skills Minister Matthew Hancock has been cancelled.

The Skills Funding Agency said that given the "immediate level of interest" in changes to Funding Rules 2013/14, it would run the existing funding simplification webinars instead of the event scheduled for April 17.

The webinars are scheduled for Wednesday, March 28, and Wednesday, April 3.

## Agency 'corrects' 16-19 data

Figures for provisional student allocations will not be reissued after errors were discovered in data released in January.

The Education Funding Agency has said it will not release new data for 16 to 19 provisional student number allocations for 2013/14.

Providers found students were missing from the annual school census, along with other errors, but the agency said that it had "taken corrective action".

Final 16 to 19 funding allocations were due to be published at the end of this month.

## Eligible courses listed

A list published by the Skills Funding Agency revealed 773 providers were due to offer courses eligible for funding by 24+ advanced learning loans. Learners aged 24 and over will be able to apply for money through the new loans system from April for courses starting from August.

The agency's funding rules say listed providers "must publish, by April 1, their methodology — including complaints procedures — for awarding the discretionary learner support element of the Loans Bursary Fund".

# Scrabble to rename the FE Guild

Eleanor Radford  
[@EleanorRadford](#)

The proposed FE Guild could have a different name by the time it is launched in August.

Peter Davies, who heads a project helping to shape the guild, said a survey was set up after consultation revealed that more than 60 per cent of respondents did not like the original title.

He said that many of the 200 or so replies to the survey suggested that FE did not "reflect the whole sector" while the word guild was "a bit traditional".

Other suggestions have included the words skills, institute or alliance, said Mr Davies, former principal of London-based adult education provider City Lit.

He said it was important that the organisation — designed to set professional standards in FE as funding ends for the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) — should not alienate any part of the sector.

"There was a view that we needed to look at the name," he said.

"People felt strongly that the further education — FE — aspect did not cover the whole sector. Some felt that the title referred just to colleges and private providers, and many felt guild was more linked to individuals rather than an organisation.

"We've all seen organisations come and go and I think it's important to get the name right to give it some stability."

He said he preferred "something around learning and skills" as it was "more all-embracing".

But he admitted that some respondents liked the word guild because it "gave a feeling of stability and longevity, which would be quite unique for this sector".

David Hughes, chief executive of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education who is independent chair of the guild's steering group, revealed on Twitter that he preferred the title Guild for Learning and Skills.

And Christine Doubleday, deputy executive director of the 157 Group, said she backed the FE moniker but preferred institute.

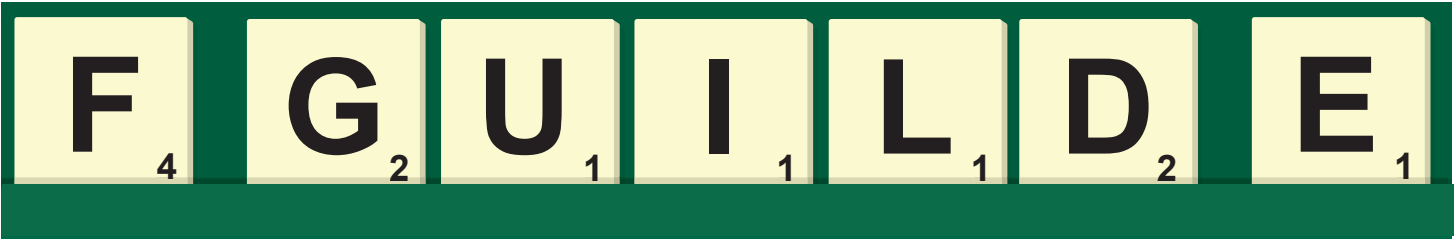
"While we fully appreciate the power of the word guild for a craft-based focus, FE is much broader and varied," she said. "Therefore the word institute has broader appeal as in Institute for FE Professionalism, or Professional Institute for FE, or FE Professional Institute, which puts us on a par with other professional bodies."

During a recent Association of Colleges conference that focused on the guild, Mr Hughes said its steering group, involving representatives from 28 groups, was still considering the priorities of the organisation, due to launch in August.

He estimated the guild would have around £10m to spend in its first year compared with the £100m LSIS had in its first year.

The survey on potential names can be found at [www.feguild.info](http://www.feguild.info).

It will be discussed at the FE Guild steering group's meeting today.



# Colleges keep sign-off of 16 to 18 provision

Chris Henwood  
@Chris\_Henwood

The government has clarified its position on local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) after FE leaders were left scratching their heads after what one sector leader called “bizarre” official advice.

The confusion revolves around the extent to which LEPs had sign-off on 16 to 18 provision.

On Monday, March 18, the government said that “all FE learning providers must consult and agree their provision with LEPs to ensure the courses they offer to 16 to 18-year-olds reflect local labour requirements”.

However, the Department for Education (DfE) later told *FE Week*: “Ultimately, schools and colleges remain autonomous and are free to decide how to meet the needs of their students.”

The issue surfaced after the government’s response to Lord Heseltine’s No Stone Unturned report, which, among other things, called for power to be devolved to LEPs.

In last week’s Budget, Chancellor George

Osborne (pictured) further indicated the government’s acceptance of the former deputy prime minister’s ideas, by making reference to a “Single Local Growth Fund...operational by April 2015”.

However, James Kewin, deputy chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges’ Association, questioned the wisdom of giving LEPs sign-off on its largely academic 16 to 18 provision.

He said: “Given that around three-quarters of what we deliver is either AS or A-level, it would be bizarre to insist that we must agree our provision with LEPs.

“It is interesting that there is not a corresponding requirement for schools or academies to agree their provision in this way, even though many have a sixth form and are in direct competition with our members.”

But a government spokesperson has now clarified the apparently conflicting guidance.

He said the DfE was right, and added: “We are encouraging colleges to have a strong focus on work and meeting skills shortages.

“As part of this we want LEPs to have an influence over skills policy and to set local skills strategies against which colleges can

respond, with chartered status for FE colleges being dependent on taking account of partnership priorities.”

The issue of LEPs remains a concern among FE leaders, though, with the government having accepted 81 of Lord Heseltine’s 89 recommendations, including FE providers having to consult with LEPs.

And the Chancellor said more decisions on LEPs — including the possible inclusion of the adult skills budget in a single funding pot — would be made in the annual spending review, in June.

Lynne Sedgmore, 157 Group executive director, said: “Programmes offered by colleges for learners of all ages are already designed in line with labour market intelligence and in partnerships with employers.

“Formal scrutiny by LEPs and employers must add value to what is already a rigorous quality assurance and partnership process.

“How can colleges be assured and convinced that LEPs have the capacity and skills to carry out this role effectively, and not just add an additional layer of bureaucracy and cost to a skills system that works very effectively



© PA Images

and is fit for purpose?”

Julian Gravatt, assistant chief executive of the Association of Colleges, said: “Colleges are keen to correspond with, and be influenced by, LEPs in how the skills funding colleges currently receive is deployed to best effect. But this does not mean that we need to re-create the bureaucracy of training and enterprise councils or similar.”

# Funding protection outlined

Eleanor Radford  
@EleanorRadford

The Skills Funding Agency has announced more detail on a measure to protect providers from potentially huge drops in funding under a new payments regime.

The agency revealed that it would be acting to stop providers’ funding dropping by more than 3 per cent in the next academic year.

Agency payments for delivering qualifications under the new system would also be protected to within 6 per cent the following year.

The measure — termed transitional protection — will also limit the amount the agency pays out, with *FE Week* research having shown the value of some qualifications could rocket under the agency’s new system.

One such qualification looks set to soar 271 per cent as the agency moves from the ‘demand-led funding formula’ to the ‘streamlined funding system for adults’ from August.

Last month the agency exclusively told *FE Week* (see front page, above) that the protective measure would come into play after research showed the value of many qualifications would fall more than 20 per cent.

And a recent agency webinar also told of late changes to credit bandings for awards (one to 12 credits) in the agency’s ‘simplified funding rates matrix’.

An agency spokesperson said: “Over the past few months, we have been consulting the sector on the most effective mechanism to underpin the transition to the simplified funding system. “We are setting out the arrangements for this

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Inside

### College leaders join PM in India

Major international colleges announced the launch of a new initiative to support the Indian government in its efforts to improve its skills sector. The initiative, known as the Indian Skills Education Partnership (ISEP), will see colleges from the UK, Australia, and the US working with the Indian government to develop and deliver skills training programmes for Indian students. The initiative is part of the Indian government's efforts to improve its skills sector and is expected to be operational by April 2015.

### Providers to get funding protection

The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) has announced a new measure to protect providers from potentially huge drops in funding under a new payments regime. The measure, known as transitional protection, will ensure that providers' funding does not drop by more than 3 per cent in the next academic year. The measure will also limit the amount the agency pays out, with FE Week research having shown the value of some qualifications could rocket under the agency's new system.

### Options listed in the agency's Provider Risk Assessment and Management guidance

The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) has published its Provider Risk Assessment and Management guidance. The guidance lists a range of options for providers to manage their risk, including: 1. Implementing a risk management system. 2. Implementing a quality assurance system. 3. Implementing a financial management system. 4. Implementing a health and safety system. 5. Implementing an environmental management system. 6. Implementing a social responsibility system. 7. Implementing a governance system. 8. Implementing a compliance system. 9. Implementing a legal system. 10. Implementing a tax system. 11. Implementing a customs system. 12. Implementing a trade system. 13. Implementing a transport system. 14. Implementing a communication system. 15. Implementing a marketing system. 16. Implementing a sales system. 17. Implementing a distribution system. 18. Implementing a service system. 19. Implementing a support system. 20. Implementing a training system. 21. Implementing a development system. 22. Implementing a research system. 23. Implementing a innovation system. 24. Implementing a technology system. 25. Implementing a digital system. 26. Implementing a cloud system. 27. Implementing a mobile system. 28. Implementing a wearable system. 29. Implementing a smart system. 30. Implementing a connected system. 31. Implementing a secure system. 32. Implementing a private system. 33. Implementing a public system. 34. Implementing a hybrid system. 35. Implementing a multi-cloud system. 36. Implementing a multi-region system. 37. Implementing a multi-tenant system. 38. Implementing a multi-tenant system. 39. Implementing a multi-tenant system. 40. Implementing a multi-tenant system.

in the briefings we are now undertaking with providers.

“These arrangements will ensure the impact on providers from the new funding system will be limited to 3 per cent in 2013/14 and 6 per cent in 2014/15.”

She said there would be “specific measures” to protect some areas of provision changing due to wider and longer-term qualification reform, such as at English for Speakers of Other Languages.

The spokesperson was unavailable to further comment on changes to credit bandings.

The change in the value assigned to qualifications in shifting to the new system is called turbulence.

“We accept that the simplified funding system will shift rates of individual qualifications, but our initial assessments suggest that turbulence at provider level will be low in most cases,” the agency has said previously.

“Transitional protection will be put in place to limit this turbulence even further.”

When the current funding system was introduced in 2008/09, transitional protection was also put in place for the same reason and on that occasion funding variations in both directions were limited to a maximum of 2.1 per cent.

# ‘Inadequate’ grading triggers government funding threat

Chris Henwood  
@Chris\_Henwood

City of Liverpool College could have its funding withdrawn after falling from outstanding to the lowest Ofsted grade of inadequate.

The Skills Funding Agency and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) said they were “considering action” in response to the 17,000-learner college’s inspection result.

Options listed in the agency’s Provider Risk Assessment and Management guidance include issuing a notice of concern, suspending recruitment of learners and, ultimately, withdrawing funding. Its 2012/13 academic year the college’s agency allocation was £18.5m.

A joint statement from the agency and BIS said: “Following the publication of the Ofsted report, we are considering the action we will take in line with our published processes for provider risk assessment and management.”

The Liverpool college, which achieved the highest grade almost across the board at its last inspection in early 2009, was revisited in early February. It was graded inadequate in every headline Ofsted field.

It has withdrawn from the 157 Group as a result of the report that said the college, formerly Liverpool Community College, had too many students turning up late for lessons — if at all — and leaving without qualifications.

It said there were improvements in leadership, but governors had “not monitored the significant deterioration in student performance”.

Principal Elaine Bowker, who took up post mid-2011, said she accepted the result, but declined to add to her statement issued on March 15 — the day the Ofsted report was published.

She said: “We accept the report and are working hard to ensure that the areas highlighted as inadequate are improved.

“We have met with all of our internal teams,

from governors to teaching staff, and we are certain that there is a strong commitment to tackle any weaknesses.”

Lynne Sedgmore, 157 Group executive director, said: “We fully understand the college’s top priority will be to focus on improving performance and regaining good or outstanding grades.”

The college remains a member of the Gazelle Group, whose chief executive, Fintan Donohue, said: “Gazelle totally recognises the value of the Ofsted process and every Gazelle college is wholly committed to achieving the highest possible grades.

“However, this is not a deciding factor in the membership, therefore City of Liverpool membership remains unaffected, and Gazelle remains fully supportive of the college.”

Meanwhile, Liverpool City Council’s cabinet member for employment, enterprise and skills, Nick Small, said he was “confident the issues raised by Ofsted have already started to be addressed”.

And Shadow Education Secretary Stephen Twigg, Labour MP for Liverpool West Derby, said he would be having regular discussions with Mrs Bowker about the situation at the college.

Louise Ellman, Labour MP for Liverpool Riverside, added: “The college must address this major challenge and show how improvements can be made rapidly. I am confident this can be achieved.”

Steve Rotherham, Labour MP for Liverpool Walton, said: “The leadership team of the college is working hard to ensure that areas highlighted in the Ofsted report are addressed and will continue to do so with our support.”

And Luciana Berger, Labour MP for Liverpool Wavertree, said: “While the Ofsted report was disappointing and the weaknesses must be addressed... I am confident the college will work hard to ensure this happens.”



Editor's comment

So it can be done

Huge congratulations to Walsall College on a stunning double first for a general further education college.

The outstanding result comes in stark contrast to our last front page story, which reported on City of Liverpool College's grade four.

And all this follows a string of poor results and a less than complimentary annual report from Ofsted.

So beyond the obvious congratulations and reward of recognition, this should come as a welcome relief to other large colleges.

Why? Because it shows that a large college can achieve an outstanding grade with an "assiduous determination to improve the quality of teaching and learning".

Oh, and under the new Ofsted inspection regime Walsall now has an outstanding college as well as an outstanding local authority provider of adult education.

So in the postcode lottery of quality providers, it seems WS is the place to be.

Nick Linford, editor

Correction

The stresses of running a successful college are surely enough to turn anybody's hair grey.

It's not just Ofsted inspection grades that could be affected by the strain of foreign projects or unruly students — think of the follicles, too.

Yes, being the top dog can age you.

So without making any assumptions over the result of stresses and strains, hairwise or otherwise, we appear to have been somewhat generous to Mike Hopkins at Middlesbrough College.

His profile article had him as 49 years old, when he's actually five years older than that.

"Sadly, I am not 49 but coming up to 55," he said, graciously.

"I'm only saying because my mates would rib me for fibbing about my age."

Have you spotted something wrong with this edition of FE Week?

If so, feel free to tell us about it, including the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is. Email us at news@feweek.co.uk with Corrections in the subject line.



Report calls for National VET Centre

Rebecca Cooney

@RebeccaKCooney

The creation of a national centre for vocational training has been recommended in a report by the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning (CAVTL), published today.

The National Vocational Education and Training (VET) Centre would champion research and development of vocational pedagogy, the report suggested, and would develop a regional network of centres to showcase excellent vocational teaching and learning.

The commission's chair, Frank McLoughlin CBE, said: "It's clear there has to be something to hold the centre of the development of the VET system, for things like curriculum design, continuing professional development for staff or technology development.

"All the countries recognised as having best practice, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, have national VET centres or institutes . . . it's really important for training providers, employers, and people delivering technology to work together."

The report proposes that any national

centre should be developed jointly by training providers, employers, the FE Guild and government, who would work with university and international research experts.

Institute for Learning chief executive Toni Fazaeli welcomed the proposal, saying the time was right for a greater national commitment to FE research.

She added: "Learners and employers rightly expect the practice of teaching, training and learning to be based on sound and groundbreaking research and evidence, rivalling the very best in the world.

"For too long, despite some outstanding contributions, we have lamented the relative paucity of university-led research focusing on FE compared with schools and higher education."

Mr McLoughlin said the centre could also help with the implementation of the commission's recommendations around the availability of technology and industry standard facilities for learners.

"The use of sophisticated digital simulation is transforming the place of work, for example around artillery or aero engines," he said.

"Digital simulation needs a significant investment . . . colleges, training providers and employers could collectively lever money in to

the National VET Centre."

The report also called for the sector to adopt the concept of the relationship between employers and vocational training providers as a 'two-way street', where employers were not just customers of vocational education, but were engaged at every level in the creation and delivery of programmes.

"There is a caricature that colleges and training providers are just qualifications machines, separated off from employers," said Mr McLoughlin.

"It's largely not true but there are many more opportunities to ensure colleges, training providers and employers work hand in hand."

Other central recommendations include a nationally specified curriculum where elements could be tailored to local demand and the introduction of Teach Too, a training scheme to ensure trainers have a dual professionalism as both teachers and experts in their field.

Mr McLoughlin said: "There's a big prize here. We've got the elements of a world-beating vocational system. The measure of the success of our recommendations will be that in 10 years, nobody goes to Germany, Denmark or Switzerland. Instead people will visit the UK to see how we do it."

Comment

Leading college falls from outstanding to inadequate

I think that these inspections where a college falls from grace are important and give the right message. This would not have happened a few years ago, when colleges were wrapped in clover and deemed too big to fail.

The focus on teaching and assessment is long overdue. The trouble is that nothing will really be done to sort them out.

There are a load of colleges that have been Grade 3 or 4 for years and still get their funding every year. One rule for one type of organisation another rule for others.

Nelly

Value of new FE quality kitemark questioned

FE quality kitemark – Another meaningless badge of honour. Why does this country keep coming up with so much nonsense? Why do we pay people to come up with so much nonsense on an almost continuous basis? Every time they say "it's different this time" – it never is.

FE Lecturer

Top college grade expected

No mention of non FE colleges receiving 'Outstanding' gradings under the new inspection regime. Maybe FE colleges have something to learn from the other half of the FE sector.

Paul Allford

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FE Week profile

# Gordon Marsden ~ his story

Eleanor Radford  
@EleanorRadford

The Shadow Skills Minister  
talks to FE Week

Picture the young Gordon Marsden on his first day as a tutor for the Open University. It is the early 1980s. He is standing in a hall in Tottenham, North London, and no one is taking much notice of him. He is 20 years younger than most of the others in the hall. What to do?

“I went to the front and heavily put my files on the desk and said: ‘I am Gordon Marsden and I am your course tutor’. We took it from there,” says the Shadow Skills Minister.

It may have been a shaky start, but it was the start of a long love affair between the now 59-year-old and the university.

So much so that he went on to tutor part-time in history for the next 20 years. But it wasn’t his first – or only – job. He’d already worked in public relations before editing History Today, as well as New Socialist.

This was after graduating from the University of Oxford and completing postgraduate research at Harvard University, all before he was 30.

But it is the ethos of the Open University — education for all — that has resonated most with Marsden.

“Giving people life chances is very important to me; it is at the centre of my political beliefs,” he says.

“Socialism is what Labour governments do, but for me it was always about practical things to improve people’s life chances.”

Marsden won Blackpool South for Labour in the late 1990s, a seat that he retains today.

“I knew Blackpool as a child and I thought that seaside and coastal towns had had a raw deal in terms of small businesses and tourism,” he says.

“But these things are important because of the cultural and historical resonance so I asked, ‘how do we get this town regenerated?’ How do we get skills?” I also pushed the position of small businesses.

“In 1997, I became the first Labour MP in Blackpool. I thought whatever else happens to me, I’ve always got a little piece of history here.”

Marsden, who lives in Brighton with his partner of 28 years, Richard, grew up in a Labour household.

His father had been a trade union shop steward and, by the age of 10, the schoolboy from Romiley, just outside Stockport, had already stood for Labour in a mock election.

“I knew it was the party for me then, so when I was 17 I decided to join,” he says.

“I tracked down the local secretary who lived with his mother nearby and was literally signed up there and then in his front room.

“His mother gave me a hand-knitted Labour rosette, which I still have. My involvement with the party from those days really coloured

my view of what I thought politics was about.”

Marsden, born in Manchester, describes his railway engineer father and housewife mother as “ordinary working-class” people who “thoroughly supported him” through life.

He went to grammar school and was the first of his family to win a university place, giving his parents “very quiet pride”.

He describes his days studying history at Oxford as a “very important experience”.

“I met a huge range of people from different backgrounds and there were lots of opportunities to get involved with things — the debating society, historical society, literary groups and the Fabian Society,” he recalls.

“It focuses you sharply when you come from a background where no one had gone to university, let alone Oxford.

“I was there in the mid to late 1970s and I was very grateful, but there were a lot of people who I felt had come from much more privileged backgrounds who were playing at being revolutionaries. I used to call them mini Marxists.”

He got to know many well-known figures, including Peter Mandelson and Benazir Bhutto [Pakistan’s only female Prime Minister, who was assassinated in 2007].

“Benazir was a close friend,” says Marsden.

“It was difficult at the time because the situation in Pakistan was so complex and we were all very concerned about what would happen in the future for her. It was a great loss, not just for her friends and family but also for her country.”

Marsden continued to pursue his love of history — handed to him, he says, by his grandfather — researching medieval religion for the Warburg Institute after university. But he crossed the Atlantic when the chance came up to take a year out to look into US politics.

He arrived on the eve of Jimmy Carter’s presidency, and was soon involved with an inquiry on human rights in Eastern Europe.

On his return, Margaret Thatcher was taking power for the Conservatives and academic jobs were, he says, “thin on the ground”.

Although the young academic landed the “dream job for a historian”, editing History Today, at his heart Marsden was still a political man, worrying about the bigger picture and the country in which he lived.

“The 1980s were a very difficult time for the



Labour Party and a very frustrating time for me,” he says.

“I felt a lot of posturing and sloganising was getting in the way of the big issues to improve people’s lives and the things that we should have been doing to fight Thatcherism and the Conservatives.

“I never thought of leaving the party because it was in my family, but it was only when Neil Kinnock became leader in the mid-1980s that I thought we were getting somewhere.”

He said Lord Kinnock inspired him so much that he wanted to “step up to the plate”. It was then that he started putting himself forward for a seat in Blackpool.

“When Neil Kinnock made his famous speech, ‘why am I the first Kinnock in a thousand generations to go to university?’ he

said it wasn’t because his ancestors were not strong — it was because they had no platform on which to build,” says Marsden.

“That’s how I feel when I think of my grandfather and mother.”

Would local enterprise partnerships go some way to addressing this?

“The principle that skills policy should have a very strong local and sub-regional input is essential,” he says.

“We want the highest possible democratic participation in that process of decision-making. The students in FE, the apprentices, their families, local authorities have all got to have a say in that.”

But he adds that engagement between colleges and partnerships varies and his “top priority” is to create “strong, transparent structures and frameworks in education that will allow people to dip in and out.

“We should keep doors open and build bridges, not barriers,” he says.

How does he feel he was able to create his own platform?

“You just have to keep at it. You get disappointments and knockbacks, but you have to pull yourself up and not think that simply because you got on the ladder, that everyone else can get on the same one,” explains Marsden.

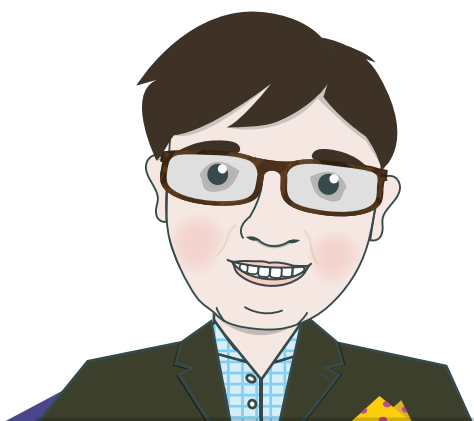
“I want to create exciting new frameworks in education that will make Britain prosper — at the same time giving people life chances.”

### It's a personal thing

<b>What's your favourite book?</b> A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens	<b>If you could invite anyone to a dinner party, living or dead, who would it be?</b> Elizabeth I, Charles Dickens, Aneurin 'Nye' Bevan, Desmond Tutu, Louis Macneice [poet], Francis Poulenc [composer]
<b>What did you want to be when you were younger?</b> An archaeologist	<b>What would your super power be?</b> To visit – and learn from – the past
<b>What do you do to switch off from work?</b> Listen to music – everything from Hildegard of Bingen and Thomas Tallis, to John Adams and Sufjan Stevens	



# The front line, the back office, and the long corridor in between



**FE INSIDER** | Ben Nicholls  
@bnichollsuk

**Former House of Commons Education Select Committee specialist Ben Nicholls is head of policy at London's Newham College. He writes exclusively for FE Week every month**

Michael Gove, easily the naughtiest boy in the class in many teachers' eyes, got himself into trouble again last week. But this time he might be feeling a bit unfairly treated as he was taking the rap for a colleague's misbehaviour.

The Education Secretary was hauled back in front of the Commons education committee over concerns about his

special advisers' alleged bullying attitudes towards staff at the Department for Education, and if the defensive tone of his letter to the committee's acting chair, Pat Glass, is anything to go by, he wasn't entirely happy about it.

The bullying issue is clearly important. But other than that it's difficult, perhaps, to work up much interest in this story. Outside the Westminster-Whitehall village, ministers' special advisers – or SpAds – seem pretty irrelevant.

It's easy, in fact, to agree with Sir David Bell, once permanent secretary at the department and now Reading's vice-chancellor, who said last year that he "cannot get excited about the issue of special advisers, having worked with quite a few." He argued that they are "an important part of our system" but are "only small in number compared with the department as a whole".

Sir David is undoubtedly right, but SpAds are, as he noted, "very powerful", which might lead – as Gove's recall suggests – to them getting a little big for their boots. Concerns exist, too, that SpAds might be part of a growing 'politicisation' of the civil service.

But of arguably more concern is the provenance of whatever advisers are closest to ministers. Are the political advisers

closest to our own political servants (let's not go with masters) and experts in the fields they advise on? Are the civil servants involved? And, most important, what should the balance be?

Sir David has argued that the current system 'requires' that civil servants are generalists, and there are plenty of advantages to this. It means that experts bring a useful degree of outsiders' scrutiny to issues; further, it means that civil servants are recruited not for specialist knowledge, which arguably ought to be condensed at the front line where it is needed, but for more general skills that are transferable between departments and jobs. In theory this means the system is efficient and well-organised.

This said, though, Sir David's former colleague Jon Coles – now heading the United Learning Trust – argues that a strength of the department is "its ability and willingness to bring in very senior practitioners from outside and to have civil servants going outside... so that there is a proper understanding of life in the education system in the department".

The department itself lists several such appointments in a recent report – including ex-headteachers Charlie Taylor and Elizabeth Sidwell – and has promised to

consider "how to increase secondments into the department".

This opportunity might provide particular scope for FE, offering as it does a breadth of provision rarely found in schools, sixth forms or universities, and which might prove useful to the department and its (rightly generalist) civil servants.

And yet the department rejected the call of the Commons education committee, in 2011, to appoint chief advisers on education and children's services, and its first round of non-executive directors following the election included more representatives from the financial sector than the world its policies impact on.

At a time when politicians themselves are so mistrusted, these questions of the gap between the front line and the back office are critical, particularly if – as I pleaded in my last column – we are serious as a sector when it comes to engaging with the policy development process.

*Ben Nicholls*

## FE Week Experts

# How the FE sector – and its students – are being starved



**It's time to end the inequity that means more than 103,000 16 to 18-year-old college students miss out on a free school meal, says Nic Dakin**

If you're 16 or 17 and in a school sixth form, you can get a free school meal; if you're at an FE or sixth-form college, you cannot. This simply isn't fair.

As a former principal I know how important it is for students to have a meal during the college day. There is a direct correlation with better motivation, attendance and achievement.

That's why I've been a keen supporter of the Association of Colleges' No Free Lunch? campaign.

I'm not alone. MPs from all political parties supported my ten-minute rule bill (a parliamentary device to raise an issue and put pressure on the government) to right this wrong.

As a result, the government now understands the strength of feeling about the issue. So much so that it has moved away from the argument that it could not do anything about it because colleges did not have the kitchen facilities.

A clear nonsense, but that's what it said. Now it is saying that the schools don't get the extra money when everyone knows it was consolidated into their base budget some time ago.

More than 103,000 16 to 18-year-old college students miss out on a free school meal as a result.

Worse still, 13.3 per cent of college students are from more disadvantaged backgrounds, compared with 8.3 per cent of school students. This means that those with the greatest need are suffering the greatest disadvantage.

This unfairness is causing real hardship to colleges and their students, especially now the education maintenance allowance has been scrapped.

It will only get worse if the participation age is raised.

The chaotic fragmentation of post-16 education is another reason to right this wrong. It cannot be right that a student at the Hackney University Technical College can

get a free meal, while the student at Hackney FE College – they share a campus, remember – cannot.

And if that injustice isn't enough, consider this: funding per 16 to 18-year-old is lower than in other stages of education.

In 2012/13, funding per full-time 16 to 18-year-old will average £4,543, while funding per secondary pupil aged 11 to 16 will average £5,576.

**“Those with the greatest need are suffering the greatest disadvantage”**

It's hard to believe that it can really be 22 per cent cheaper to educate a 16 to 18-year-old compared with a younger child.

Interestingly, once the same student goes on to university he or she will have an average £8,000 spent on them for a teaching week of around 14 hours.

Unlike schools, colleges have to pay VAT on revenue spending and buildings. The new academies are almost identical to colleges in

their legal status, but are exempt from paying VAT on most of their purchases.

There is no rational reason or argument for this difference.

And what's more, academies currently get their insurance costs back from the government; colleges do not.

Finally, it's worth noting that unlike all other education institutions, sixth-form colleges get no quality improvement funds.

I worked in post-16 education for 30 years so know how hard people in the sector work and what a great job they do.

But they are being asked to perform more than miracles now. It's not surprising that the number of experienced principals deciding to retire is reaching epidemic proportions.

But what matters is treating our young people fairly.

While the government seems content to sprinkle money around liberally on its pet projects of free schools, university technical colleges and the like, public money is being wasted on inefficient, unproven structures.

Meanwhile the FE sector — with its track record of success and innovation — and its students are being starved.

The students, their colleges and UK plc are missing out.

*Nic Dakin, Labour MP for Scunthorpe and member of the Education Select Committee*



## FE Week Experts

# There is still a lot to play for

**The Budget didn't have a lot to offer FE. It's the spending round and possible cuts that have to stay top of the agenda, says Lynne Sedgmore**

All eyes in FE were on key indicators in this year's Budget: how might savings hit the skills budget, how much money might go into the 'single pot' and how might employers get funded more directly to engage in apprenticeships. On Budget Day, there was little additional detail.

So, it seems, that there is still a lot to play for. The promise of more cuts in the spending round has to remain uppermost on our agenda. Efficiency and pay restraint can only go so far. It is the adult skills budget that is most under threat.

Any reduction in funding for under 24s could lead to the reality of a lost generation through increasing youth unemployment. Sixteen to 18-year-olds have the comfort of the raised participation age to protect them; the picture is less assured for the over-24s.

In response to the Richard Review, the government said that it expected employers to show their commitment through what they were prepared to pay for, and that is only right. Colleges must ensure that what they offer is attractive to employers and their adult employees to encourage this commitment.

Adults trying to fund their own learning may find themselves with more loans, and we have yet to get a real sense of the impact that this year's loans introduction will have on adult learning take-up.

**“We must make sure that we are the preferred choice to offer the training that new employees will need”**

Perhaps the time has come for us to offer an alternative solution that may be more attractive than loans? Or should we make more of a case for HE funding to be reviewed to create a more level playing field for all those in education beyond 19?

We know that the 'single pot' has two real problems. First, that skills could be fighting for precedence over potholes and houses and, second, that local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) may not be mature enough – or organ-

ised enough – to deal appropriately with this funding.

The announcement of the Witty review into how universities can offer help to LEPs is welcome – and we will all, I am sure, be pushing for the FE voice to be heard in this forum too. As the spending round materialises we must show that colleges are engaged in effective partnerships already, are strategically engaged in discussions around skills needs, and are vital to the future of the partnerships.

And if, as it seems, the employer ownership pilot model is the way that direct employer funding will go, then we need to be a key element in its success, with colleges and other FE providers featuring prominently within the supply chain, not just as deliverers of a commissioned training service, but as key players in the design and implementation of the project.

The Budget gives significant support to employers wishing to take on staff. We must make sure that we are the preferred choice to offer the training that new employees will need.

The Budget did reaffirm that the government believes apprenticeships are critical to growth, and the CBI, among others, clearly believes that the skills system we have is fit for purpose to deliver high quality training.



Our challenge now, if we are to protect the public funding that will continue to be available for adult skills development, is to demonstrate that the proposed devolution of funding can only work properly with the essential involvement of FE at every level.

*Lynne Sedgmore CBE,  
executive director, the 157 Group*

TRIBAL

## New online learning resources

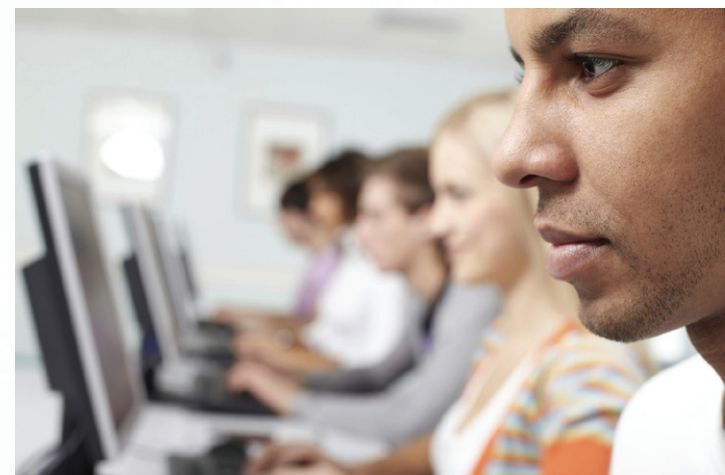
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## FE Week Experts

# Squeezing the heart of adult education

**Broad-based adult education that stretches minds, stimulates aesthetic delight and gives people the chance to change their lives is increasingly under threat, says Alan Tuckett**

Helena Kennedy's clarion call 15 years ago to widen access in FE had a major impact on colleges, as did John Tomlinson's 2004 report on inclusive learning and Sir Claus Moser's 1998 report on adult literacy.

Literacy survives, but where is the energy that shaped provision for adults over 25 in the years after incorporation? In higher education, there is a campaign to protect the study of humanities and social sciences. In schools there has been a healthy reaction to pressures to narrow the curriculum. But where is the same mobilisation in further and adult education?

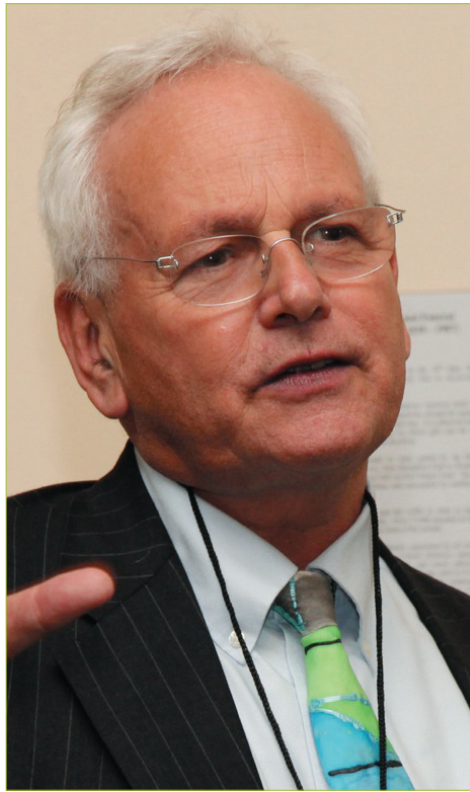
The rot set in a decade ago when Train to Gain, the first of the almost annual skills strategies, was introduced. Public money began to shift from training that adults chose to take part in, to training that government felt adults ought to take part in.

**“Adult loans are only the latest boulder in the way of adults wanting to change their lives through learning”**

While provision for 14 to 19 and 19 to 24-year-olds expanded, funding for anyone over 25 flat-lined and then reduced. So did participation. Step by step, funded learning opportunities have shrunk back to apprenticeships (surely too often Train to Gain recycled), basic skills and level two qualifications. Adult loans are only the latest boulder in the way of adults wanting to change their lives through learning.

Don't get me wrong – I am in favour of good vocational education for adults – but there is more to life and learning than work, important though it is.

Adults also have been marginalised in HE, despite the demographic imperative for an adult workforce to keep up to date. Woe betide you if you change career and study in HE



at a level at or below the level of qualification you gained for your first career.

And what used to be called liberal studies – the chance to negotiate the curriculum, to explore and make sense of what is happening in the world, and to reflect on how to influence it – has all but disappeared from public service provision for adults.

Confident and experienced learners have, of course, found ways of organising learning for themselves, as the massive take-up of MOOCs or i-Tune U courses illustrates. But the dynamic heart of adult education – combining the pursuit of social justice through second-chance learning in a context where people of different backgrounds and experience can share experience and find mutual understanding – is under threat.

Broad-based critical adult education that stretches the mind, stimulates aesthetic delight and encourages people to make themselves anew is an important facet of a civilised society, as are cinemas, libraries, art galleries and sports stadia.

But adult learning is more than just a good in itself. It is good for mental health, both in preserving good health and offering a safe arena to rebuild relationships after a period of illness. It prolongs an independent active life. Adults who learn have a measurable and positive impact on their children's educational performance. And the major challenges facing us – climate change, obesity, new and fairer ways of organising our economy, living together in increasingly diverse communities – all involve adults in understanding what is involved, and sharing effective solutions.

You would think that given its powerful catalytic impact, all policymakers would be clamouring for more investment in opportunities for adults to make sense of the world. But they don't.

We had better make enough noise, so that they will.

*Alan Tuckett, president of the International Council for Adult Education, a visiting professor in lifelong learning at Nottingham and Leicester universities, and a governor of Cornwall College*

# Don't let more adults miss out on learning

**The bad news is that the number of part-time learners in HE is plummeting. The good news (for FE colleges) is that it's a chance to develop more business, says David Hughes**

Higher education does not usually command many column inches in *FE Week*. However, it was concerning to see how little coverage there was across the media about last week's report from the Higher Education Funding Council for England setting out some stark numbers, not least a 40 per cent reduction in part-time learners in HE since 2010. This means that 105,000 fewer adults are benefiting from higher-level learning this year.

It also confirms the fears that led us to publish a special Adults Learning Extra at the start of March in which senior people in further and higher education talked about the anticipated reduction and considered what could be done to address it.

Put simply, we are worried because this drop will result in fewer opportunities for adults to develop their talents and fill high-level jobs, which will have both an economic and social impact.

We know that participation and achievement in learning at all levels are unequal and that many people miss out on learning, despite their abilities.

Every year Adult Learners' Week pays testimony to the long learning journeys people take from no qualifications to a degree.

This current reduction shows that this year there is even less hope for those who want to get into learning in higher education. The result is less social mobility and less social justice.

This is a hot issue in higher education, but all FE colleges should think about their response too, learning from the range and scale of what is already happening in colleges.

Outside the Open University, most part-time higher education learners want and need to learn locally so that their learning can fit in with their earning and family and caring commitments.

But many universities have stopped offering part-time study, something that, for me, represents an opening for others to fill. I do not believe there are 105,000 fewer people wanting to learn this year; in fact, I believe that there are more. It's just they have not been offered the opportunity that will encourage them to take the plunge.

FE colleges are well-placed to offer those opportunities – and many already do. Counter-intuitively the introduction of advanced level learning loans for adults aged 24 and over will open up a market that the more creative colleges will no doubt mine.

Colleges should not overlook this area of potential growth. In most areas, Year 13 cohorts in schools will be getting smaller over the next few years (because of low birth



rates in the 1990s and 2000s), and colleges are well-placed to offer both FE and higher education places part-time, flexibly and at a lower cost for adults as replacements for full-time young people.

**“We know that participation and achievement in learning at all levels are unequal”**

It may be a demographic quirk, but this is not something for the short term. The need will grow as the economy gets back on its feet.

Colleges willing to expand or move into this market might also find their conversations with the emerging local enterprise partnerships a little easier too.

This is an opportunity for colleges to develop more business and to meet need. It is also an opportunity that has positive social and economic benefits and one that will go down well with employers, stakeholders and potential learners.

I shall watch the stampede with interest and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education will happily support in any way we can.

*David Hughes, chief executive of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education*



## FE Week Experts

# Why my students deserve pride of place

**The contradictory rhetoric around vocational courses has done much harm; students' achievement needs to be revealed and celebrated rather than downgraded, says Eddie Playfair**

Dolores, Emma, Neneh and Rebecca all have something in common; they are high-achieving vocational students.

With 44 other students at Newham sixth-form college (NewVIc), last year they achieved the highest possible grade, a triple starred distinction in their extended diplomas: in business, performing arts, engineering and sport respectively.

Some also achieved high grades in an additional A-level and all four went on to university. Thirty-eight of their classmates also progressed to university, including Russell group institutions such as University College London, King's College London, Queen Mary University of London and Nottingham University.

Dolores, for example, is now studying international management at the School of Oriental and African Studies with a year abroad.

The qualifications they obtained will give these young people the opportunity to pursue interesting and valuable professional careers in dance, theatre studies, surveying, aeronauti-

cal engineering, accounting, law, sports science, architecture, tourism and marketing ... to mention just a few.

Their success is built on the intensive and challenging vocational programmes they followed; courses requiring the development of deep levels of professional knowledge and mastery. To achieve such high grades, they will have produced outstanding assignments, projects and portfolios that demonstrate the application of extensive knowledge and a broad range of interconnected skills. This is why so many universities value the excellent preparation they offer for many applied degrees.

But it is about much more than these 48 students. There are many others like them. More than 400 students at NewVIc achieved vocational qualifications last year; 377 progressed to university. The overwhelming majority were black and minority students living in so-called deprived postcodes.

We are proud of these achievements – as are the students. We celebrate the confidence, creativity and mastery that they have demonstrated. But is this pride echoed by our politicians and is the celebration reflected in our national media?

Sadly, the tone of the national conversation about vocational qualifications is more often

distrustful than celebratory; questioning their quality and rigour, making unflattering comparisons with A-levels and implying that they are less challenging because they have less external assessment. Substantial and demanding programmes have been confused with smaller or less stretching ones, sending out a message of low quality.

Look at, for example, the changing treatment of vocational qualifications in national performance tables. For 2012, the points tariff for extended diplomas (equivalent to 3 A-levels) was arbitrarily reduced, despite the universities' admissions service, UCAS, maintaining the grade equivalences (eg, Dist\* equal to an A\* grade at A-level and Dist. equal to an A grade).

While A-level performance has been picked out in the tables, vocational achievements remain hidden in a broad category of 'A-levels and equivalences', making it hard to see their success.

These national tables are an important signal about what we value. The message seems to be: 'vocational is second best'. So much for parity of esteem.

It's time to really value vocational learning. The latest government proposals to reform vocational qualifications are a welcome attempt to clarify which qualifications are 'high value',



whether 'occupational' or 'applied general'.

The sooner these 'high value' vocational qualifications get the seal of approval, the sooner the many thousands of brilliant students such as Dolores, Emma, Neneh and Rebecca can get due recognition for their achievements.

*Eddie Playfair, principal of Newham Sixth Form College (NewVIc). He is the London principal representative on the Sixth Form Colleges' Association council*

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# FE Week campus round-up

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## Printmaking skills on display



From left: Foundation diploma in art and design students Megan Lovett, 19, Mila Harris-Mussi, 18 and Sophie Clifford, 19, with an installation showing off their skills

Art students in the South West have been making an impression alongside a professional exhibition at their college. Learners at Stroud School of Art, based at South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, have created an installation that shows off their printmaking skills. It coincides with the National Contemporary Print Exhibition at the college that showcases local and national printmakers. Foundation diploma in art and design student

Mila Harris-Mussi, 18, from Stroud, said: “The display looks fantastic. It has been a great experience to have been involved.” The installation is a joint project made up of work created by students working at all levels in the college, including full-time and part-time learners. Mila’s classmate Sophie Clifford, 19 and also from Stroud, said: “Seeing our artwork on such a spectacular display in the best thing ever. It’s great to see all the finished artwork together.”

## Pershore hopes to make it a double



Douglas Mackay (left) hands over the Warwickshire College horticulture mantle to Owen Groves

A Warwickshire College student has dug deep to make the final line-up for the Young Horticulturist of the Year award. Owen Groves, 23, who studies at Warwickshire’s Pershore College, will be cheered on by classmate Douglas Mackay, 22, who won top prize last year. Owen, a BSc horticulture student from Cardiff, said: “Douglas and I have been on the same course for the past three years. He has told me what to expect and the kind of

questions they will ask, which is handy. “I’m hoping to go up the final with a few friends for support. “I’m going to do my best. Everyone’s hoping Pershore can win two years in a row.” Julie Page, assistant principal for land-based studies at Pershore, said: “We’re really proud of Owen winning the regional final of the competition.” The national final will be held at the University of Liverpool on April 13.



From left: Macclesfield College students Ben Ranger, 17, Ryan Morgan, 18, Lauren Beaumont, 17, tutor Sally Hollinshead, and students Lexi Kay, Josie Fogarty, both 17, Akif Deen, 19, Jessica Crossland, Liliya Oakes and Lucie Hoodless, all 16

## How to dress for a day in the lab

Local employer AstraZeneca gave a group of young Cheshire scientists the chance of look at science in a real working context. Applied science students from Macclesfield College made a short trip to the company’s nearby facility for a first-hand glimpse of life in the lab. Lecturer Amy White said the visit allowed the students to see many of the techniques they used in the classroom — and even allowed them to try on some kit. “We visited the microbiology labs and

the analytical labs, and viewed processes such as dissolution and high performance liquid chromatography, along with looking at samples of micro-organisms,” she said. “The students dressed in the full anti-contamination gown worn by workers in the microbiology labs and looked at the intricate work to manufacture medicines and drugs.” The visit also gave the students a chance to ask questions about pursuing a career in the industry.



Keisha Golding, 21, did her science BTec level three at The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London and is now studying forensic science at the University of Kent

## London college boosts science courses

The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London celebrated National Science and Engineering Week by launching a host of new courses, including a HNC in applied chemistry. The new HNC will run alongside HNCs and BTec level threes in engineering. The three courses will give students the opportunity to progress from level two and three courses while staying at the college. Vice principal of curriculum and learning environment Jane O’Neill said: “Year-on-year we see more students who want to study in this area, so it’s a natural progression that we expand and give students what they need to succeed in the industry.” The college also plans to introduce HNDs next year, so students can stay even longer. The engineering BTec level three has been introduced to prepare students for higher education and to allow them to progress on to the college’s HNC in engineering.

Want your college or training provider to appear on these pages?

Send your stories with pictures to news@feweek.co.uk including names, ages and course of students where applicable



# 'Getting to the summit was a mixture of sadness and celebration'

A Stourbridge lecturer tells Chris Henwood why he decided to climb Mt Kilimanjaro – and why his successful ascent wasn't as celebratory as he thought it might be

Midland lecturer Steve Woollock was prepared for a gruelling trek up Mt Kilimanjaro. What he wasn't prepared for was the death of a fellow climber.

The fatality happened as 41-year-old Steve reached the summit — 5,895m above sea level — leaving him with mixed emotions.

"It was awful. He collapsed two or three hours into the last day," said Steve, a carpentry and joinery lecturer at Stourbridge College.

"I passed him as they were trying to bring him back to life. I didn't know him, but I'd spoken to him briefly earlier in the trip. There were 30 of us in the group but, like me, he was doing it by himself.

"He died due to altitude sickness so getting to the summit was a mixture of sadness and celebration. It was very subdued."

The Tanzanian adventure, between February 22 and March 3, helped Steve, who has been at Stourbridge College for around seven years, raise £4,000 for Prostate Cancer UK.



Stourbridge College lecturer Steve Woollock (top left) clutches a picture of his newborn baby, Daisy, and poses with fellow climbers having reached the top of Mt Kilimanjaro

However, it also took him away from his 41-year-old girlfriend, Becca Knowles — whose father, David, died of prostate cancer three years ago — and their six-month-old daughter, Daisy.

"It was tough leaving Daisy," he said.

"I took a picture of her with me. I wanted her to be with me at the top."

Steve, who is on paternity leave until June, added: "As I approach the age when men are diagnosed with the disease, it seemed fitting that I do something to help cure and care for

those suffering with prostate cancer.

"Becca's father died of prostate cancer and she's got a few friends whose fathers have also died from it.

"I work in construction, which is quite male-dominated, and spend a lot of time with students, so I thought it was important to raise awareness about the disease."

Steve said his aim was to raise £4,000 through a variety of small events in the run-up to the climb. He was "really pleased" to have achieved both goals.

"The ascent was a lot tougher than I thought it would be, with six days of between six and 14 hours of constant trekking uphill," he said.

"I'd like to thank everyone who supported me in my efforts, including staff and students at Stourbridge."

And fundraising for Prostate Cancer UK looks unlikely to stop at Mt Kilimanjaro for the adventure sports fan from Sutton Coldfield, near Birmingham.

"I'd like to climb the Old Man of Hoy sea stack in Scotland for charity next," said Steve.



## Develop better College managers

with the leading FE development programme, Sector Management College

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✓ **Enhance succession planning with a comprehensive progression route for the sector.**

Faced with shrinking budgets, today's College managers need the skills to meet a range of challenges, including:

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The answer? Sector Management College. **It's the only development programme that tackles the specific needs of FE managers.**

Developed by AoC Create in association with LSIS, the programme helps staff to manage business priorities and achieve their objectives. **Good news for them, good news for their College.**

- **CHOOSE** from four management training modules, tailored to the College sector
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"What I am doing differently as a result is managing staff more effectively, managing workload better and I am more able to tackle contentious issues"

Jenny Smith, Programme Leader - Care Studies, Boston College

"A cornerstone for individual and sector talent development" Martin Doel, Chief Executive, AoC



# FE Week campus round-up

sponsored by **empra**



Weston College students at the Houses of Parliament

## Somerset students feel the Commons touch

A new generation of legal eagles and lab boffins from Somerset have visited the Houses of Parliament and the Supreme Court in London.

As well as an interactive ‘making laws’ workshop, the 26 law and forensic science students from Weston College met their local MP, John Penrose, in a visit organised by Parliament’s Education Service.

The students also watched the Lord Speaker’s ceremony in the House of Lords and listened to a debate in the Commons led by Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Iain Duncan Smith.

Law student Gemma Dillon, 19, from Weston, said: “We met our MP and asked him questions about local issues.”

Law lecturer Alexandra Sermon said: “It was a fantastic educational visit. Students were fascinated by the history and atmosphere of the Houses of Parliament and the combative debating style between MPs.”

## ‘Brilliant’ event backs Fairtrade



From left: City College Plymouth hospitality students Claire Faithful, 19, and Kimberly Thompson, 17, at a Fairtrade Festival with Lush workers Sally Burne and Adam Crawford

High street names such as Sainsbury’s and cosmetics brand Lush took part in a Devon college’s Fairtrade Festival.

Second year hospitality and event planning students at City College Plymouth, which is committed to using Fairtrade products, hosted the event late last month.

Other departments that took part included hair and beauty and skills for life.

Student Robyn Lockhart, 19, helped to organise the event, which featured live music, cooking demonstrations and face-painting.

She said: “We are all thrilled to have had the opportunity to plan and host such a brilliant event.

“We have never planned such a big event before. It gave us invaluable experience that we can take into the workplace.”

## Knockout visit from a former champ



Former world champion boxer Billy Schwer (left) with Barking & Dagenham College student union vice president Muktar Teddy Nur

Billy Schwer, a former British, Commonwealth, European and International Boxing Organisation title holder, recently spoke to youngsters at Barking & Dagenham College as part of its Inspiration 2013 event.

More than 40 students attended the talk, in which the Luton-born 43-year-old discussed topics such as how to deal with fears and setbacks, how to aim for success and how to keep sight of goals in life.

Student union vice president Muktar Teddy Nur, 18, from Ilford, said: “Being a sports studies student and a big boxing fan, it was great to meet Billy. His talk was really inspiring and we all took a lot away from what he said.”

Other workshops in this year’s Inspiration event included a Dragons’ Den session in which students pitched business ideas to a panel of experts, giving them the opportunity to practise their presentation skills and gain valuable business advice.

## Hull College in a league of their own



North Lindsey College sport students being trained by Hull FC Rugby league

Hull FC League have given Lincolnshire sports students the chance to tackle a day’s sporting skills and leadership training.

North Lindsey College students on a range of sport-related courses took part in physical and classroom activities to gain a rugby league leadership award.

Chloe Myers, 17, who is studying a level three subsidiary diploma in sport, said: “I want to go on to university and then become a physiotherapist or PE teacher. Today’s course has been really useful — and good fun.”

Danny Scott, ‘Grow the Game’ officer with Hull FC, said: “Everyone gains a vocational qualification in a day, enabling them to assist with coaching in the community.”

He said the lessons learned could be adapted to any sport or job, and would enable the students to develop their leadership skills. “As well as learning coaching skills, individuals develop their confidence and gain transferable skills, which are great to put on a CV,” said Mr Scott.

**Want your college or training provider to appear on these pages?**

Send your stories with pictures to [news@feweek.co.uk](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk) including names, ages and course of students where applicable



## Jobs

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leadership &amp; improvement services

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## Our expertise and commitment lie in Further Education. Does yours?

**College Leadership Services is passionate about delivering a range of solutions to our clients.**

**Due to increasing demand, we are seeking to expand our candidate and associate pools for two of our key services:**

**Our Interim Management and Consultancy Service** provides outstanding interim managers and experienced consultants who specialise in the Further Education sector.

To meet the high levels of growth in this area, we are looking to add to our team of high quality interims and associates. We are looking for senior and middle managers with experience in all curriculum areas as well as quality, MIS, finance, learner services and commercial relationships.

**Our Middle Management Recruitment Service** has established a successful track record in working with colleges on their permanent management appointments.

By understanding the sector, we find colleges the best talent available, first time, achieving a 100% success rate last year. If you are an aspiring manager of the future, or a current manager considering your next move, then we would be delighted to hear from you.

If you share our passion for the sector and feel that you have the skills and experience to make a difference, you are warmly invited to speak to our team via the details below:

**Middle management recruitment enquiries:**

**Madeleine Martin** on tel 0115 911 1119 or e-mail [mmartin@collegeleadership.co.uk](mailto:mmartin@collegeleadership.co.uk)

**Interim management and consultancy enquiries:**

**David Beynon** on tel 0115 911 1268 or e-mail [dbeynon@collegeleadership.co.uk](mailto:dbeynon@collegeleadership.co.uk)

OUR INTERIM MANAGERS ARE SELF-EMPLOYED AND RECEIVE COMPETITIVE RATES OF PAY







Leeds City College

## SENIOR DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

**SALARY: RANGE FROM £100K – £125K**

**This post provides a unique leadership opportunity as Senior Deputy Principal at Leeds City College, one of the largest and most successful colleges in the sector. The College has over 1,700 staff, 40,000 students and an annual group turnover of over £90 million.**

As one of the most exciting and innovative colleges in the sector, Leeds City College is at the forefront of its local and regional agendas and is a significant national influencer. In order to succeed with its ambitious plans for the future, the College is seeking to appoint an exceptional individual with talent, energy and vision. The successful candidate will deliver outstanding service and ensure that innovative learning and teaching is at the heart of all of the College's activity.

The right candidate will also provide significant strategic leadership, reporting to the Principal & Chief Executive, Peter Roberts. If you would like to discuss this role with Peter on an informal basis, please contact Sara Porter on 0113 284 6236. Alternatively, you are welcome to make an appointment to speak with Simon Graham, Managing Director of College Leadership Services by calling 0115 911 1117.

College Leadership Services  
Expertise in FE

**THE CLOSING DATE FOR THIS POST IS: 12NOON ON TUESDAY 2ND APRIL 2013. INITIAL INTERVIEWS WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY 18TH APRIL 2013.**

We are working with College Leadership Services on this important appointment. Please contact Helen Anderson for an application pack: [handerson@collegeleadership.co.uk](mailto:handerson@collegeleadership.co.uk) or 0115 911 1117, or visit [www.collegeleadership.co.uk/current\\_appointments.asp](http://www.collegeleadership.co.uk/current_appointments.asp) for further information about this post.



**play your part**  
[leeds.citycollege.ac.uk](http://leeds.citycollege.ac.uk)

## Deputy Principal, Curriculum and Quality: c.£80k + benefits



CENTRAL SUSSEX COLLEGE

### Could you be central to our success?

Central Sussex College is an ambitious and forward-looking College that serves the economically buoyant Gatwick Diamond area. Serving over 11,000 students across our five central Sussex campuses, we are seeking an exceptional individual to work with our new Principal, Sarah Wright to ensure that the College delivers its vision of supporting aspiration and achievement.

As a key role within the College's Senior Management Team, we are looking for someone who will drive the development of our curriculum offer with the passion and commitment to deliver excellence.

The successful individual will have broad curriculum knowledge, a strong focus on quality and the ability to

demonstrate inspirational leadership of curriculum teams to enable them to develop, grow and raise their own expectations.

We are working in partnership with College Leadership Services on this important appointment.

Please contact Helen Anderson for an application pack: [handerson@collegeleadership.co.uk](mailto:handerson@collegeleadership.co.uk) or 0115 911 1117, or visit [www.collegeleadership.co.uk/current\\_appointments.asp](http://www.collegeleadership.co.uk/current_appointments.asp)

**The closing date for this post is 12pm on Tuesday 2nd April 2013. Interviews will be held on Thursday 18th and Friday 19th April 2013.**

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# the skills network

leadership & improvement services

## freelance consultants & sector specialists

The Skills Network Leadership & Improvement division is looking for freelance consultants and sector specialists to join our team.

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We have opportunities in the following areas:

- Quality Improvement and Inspection 'ever ready' solutions
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- Principal Leadership & Mentoring
- Management Information Systems (MIS)
- Finance and Resource Planning
- Project Management

Associates must be able to provide expert strategic guidance and operational support along with quality improvement solutions and delivery for our partner Colleges.

To apply or for a job description email  
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**Three exciting opportunities have arisen for experienced, innovative and energetic leaders to join our leadership team to make a significant impact within a dynamic organisation.**

### Assistant Principal - Young People

Salary: circa £65K

Job Ref: 13034

### Programme Manager - Engineering

Salary: £41,344 - £44,850 per annum

Job Ref: 13035

### Assistant Director - Quality

Salary: £36,365 - £38,576 per annum

Job Ref: 13036

## FE Week publication dates April - July 2013

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
April	15 EDITION 62	16	17	18	19	20	21
	22 EDITION 63	23	24	25	26	27	28
	29 EDITION 64	30	May 1	2	3	4	5
	6 EDITION 65	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13 EDITION 66	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20 EDITION 67	21	22	23	24	25	26
	27	28	29	30	31 June	1	2
	3 EDITION 68	4	5	6	7	8	9
	10 EDITION 69	11	12	13	14	15	16
	17 EDITION 70	18	19	20	21	22	23
	24 EDITION 71	25	26	27	28	29	30
July	1 EDITION 72	2	3	4	5	6	7

Bradford College has been delivering quality education and training for over 180 years. Each year we deliver hundreds of courses to over 20,000 learners, from across the globe. The College is one of the largest in the country and the largest provider of higher education outside of the university sector in England. We were rated highly by Ofsted at the last inspection and leadership was judged outstanding. The College is undergoing an exciting £50M new build and there is extensive growth in the young population in the City. The post holders will play a significant part in shaping the future of teaching and learning at the college.

**If you would like the opportunity to have an informal discussion about any of the posts, please contact Kath Oldale on 01274 433011.**

A disclosure and barring check will be undertaken for this post. Closing Date: Monday 15 April 2013 (12 NOON). Interviews for Assistant Principal to be held: Tuesday 30 April and Wednesday 1 May 2013.

Interviews for Programme Manager: Thursday 2 May 2013.  
Interviews for Assistant Director Quality: Friday 3 May 2013.

We're committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and expect staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Please visit [www.bradfordcollege.ac.uk](http://www.bradfordcollege.ac.uk) to view a full job description and complete an online application form. Alternatively email [recruit@bradfordcollege.ac.uk](mailto:recruit@bradfordcollege.ac.uk) stating the Job reference number to obtain an application pack. Please note CVs are not accepted.



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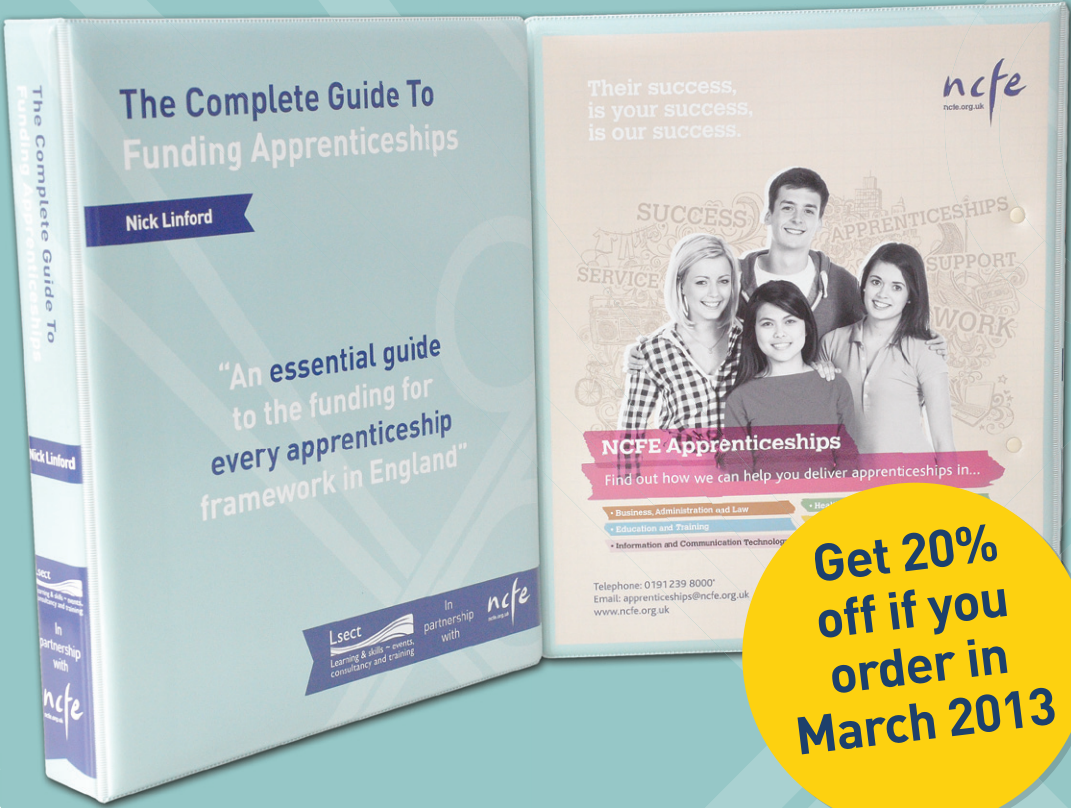


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Updated to include new functional skills rates

## FE Week Sudoku challenge

5			8			9		
		8	3			2	5	
9								8
				7	5	4		
	9			8				6
		5	4	1				
6								4
	4	1			2	6		
		2			7			9

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

9		6		1				7
		5			9	6		
1				5				3
								2
3				7				1
	6							
	2			4				6
		8	5			2		
	5			9		8		7

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

## Last Week's solutions

9	6	8	5	3	7	1	4	2
5	7	4	2	9	1	8	3	6
2	1	3	4	8	6	9	7	5
8	4	5	1	6	2	7	9	3
6	2	7	9	4	3	5	1	8
3	9	1	7	5	8	6	2	4
4	8	6	3	7	9	2	5	1
7	3	2	8	1	5	4	6	9
1	5	9	6	2	4	3	8	7

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

7	3	2	5	4	8	9	6	1
6	9	5	2	7	1	8	3	4
4	8	1	9	3	6	7	2	5
5	4	8	1	9	3	6	7	2
1	6	7	4	8	2	5	9	3
3	2	9	7	6	5	1	4	8
9	7	3	8	1	4	2	5	6
2	1	6	3	5	9	4	8	7
8	5	4	6	2	7	3	1	9

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

## FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of *FE Week's* biggest and smallest fan!



*"Mostly this week I've been pushing baby Tom around"*

You can also follow our *FE Week* mini-mascot on Twitter @daniellinford